

**State of Wisconsin**  
**DEPARTMENT OF REGULATION AND LICENSING**  
**Scope Statement**  
**Professional Counselor Section of the**  
**Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling and Social**  
**Work Examining Board**

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April 2010

**Subject:**

Proposed amendments to: definitions under Wis. Admin. Code Chap. MPSW 10; application for licensure as a professional counselor as provided in Wis. Admin Code § MPSW 11.01 pertaining to degree requirements, board approval of equivalent programs and accreditation of programs; an academic program equivalent to a degree in professional counseling pertaining to coursework requirements, credit hour requirements, accreditation standards, total program credit requirements and board approval as provided in §§ MPSW 14.01.

**POLICY ISSUES:**

**Objective of the Rules**

**Proposed Amendments to Wis. Admin Code §§ MPSW 10.01 Definitions, 11.01 Applications, MPSW 14.01 Academic Program Equivalent to a Master's Degree in Professional Counseling**

The definition or description of what is considered a Master's or Doctorate degree in Professional Counseling is not found or clarified in the Board's administrative rules; however, the statutory requirements for licensure include submitting either a "Master's Degree in Professional Counseling" or its equivalent from a program approved by the Section. The Section has found that a "professional counseling degree" does not appear to be a common name applied to a counseling master's program and more concisely is a name of a category of programs that prepare students for entry into the practice of professional counseling. Programs for counseling may have different titles including guidance and counseling, counseling psychology, rehabilitation counseling, mental health counseling, etc.

The standard for many professional counseling programs appear to be set at a minimum standard of 48 hours minimum and in some jurisdictions, up to 60 hours in the masters degree. Additionally, there are variations between the jurisdictions in topic areas, which constitute professional counseling education. Wisconsin does not have a minimum hourly requirement defined for a professional counseling program; however does include a minimum for approval of programs equivalent to professional counselor programs. Wisconsin's equivalency standards are set at 42 credits minimum, which include at least 3 credits for counseling practicum, 3 credits for counseling theory, and the remainder of 42 credits distributed over the eight identified topic areas found in administrative rules. Given the differences in the Sections credit requirement, lack of minimum credit requirement and topic areas, the Section proposes to amend minimum credit requirements and reserves the right to determine counseling education program topic areas.

## **Existing Policies Relevant to the Rule, New Policies Proposed and Analysis of Policy Alternatives.**

The Section made the following policy determinations regarding approval and pre-approval of degree programs used to satisfy the requirements for licensure.

- ◆ The Section discussed the various program names with “Counseling” in the description and how the Department should handle the application process for these programs. The Board advised the credentialing staff that if an applicant holds a master’s or doctor’s degree in “counseling” (as opposed to “professional counseling”), that is not on the approved list on the application, then credentialing will ask for a transcript to be sent. *(Discussion Re: Guidelines regarding the application process and Practicum [Sic] for Credentialing Staff to Use, Professional Counselor Section minutes, June 25, 2003)*
- ◆ The Department discussed with the Section a question frequently posed by applicants as to if they hold degrees that have names very similar to those on the “pre-approved list” would the Section accept them. Credentialing staff also asked for guidance as to what they should do with the pre-approved list – should program names be added one at a time or should there be another mechanism in place. The Section directed the Department to obtain a counseling program catalog and to include a list of CACREP approved schools along with the application materials. *(Discussion Re: Pre-approved degrees – Consider Adding Degree(s) to Pre-approved List, Professional Counselor Section minutes, Sept 24, 2003)*
- ◆ The Section held a discussion as to whether a number of specific Wisconsin Programs should be considered on the “approved program list”. The Section reviewed materials from the following programs and made determinations as to whether they would be accepted on the approved program list. Upon the review of specific programs, credentialing staff was directed to create a new preapproved program list. The Section also at this time voted to accept any CACREP or CORE accredited programs as automatically meeting the requirements for licensure. *(Discussion Re: Approval of School Programs and the Development of New Approved Degree List..., Professional Counselor Section minutes, February 1, 2005)*

### **Statutory authority.**

Wis. Stats. ss. 15.08 (5) (b) & (6); 227.11 (2); 457.03 (1)

### **Existing or proposed federal legislation. None**

### **Entities affected by the rule.**

Entities primarily affected by the rule will may be educational institutions offering professional counseling education programs and those interested in pursuing training licensure or full licensure as a professional counselor..

Changes outlined in the scope may also affect counselor programs provided by accredited colleges and universities.

**Estimate the amount of state employee time and any other resources that will be necessary to develop the rule.**

160 hours

MPSW 10, 11, 14 (Minimum Degree Requirements) Scope Statement 4-23-10